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Yonkers Green Policy Task Force News Blast

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The Green Policy Task Force and the Yonkers Public Schools recently held a press conference announcing near completion of a \$300,000 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant to help reduce airborne engine pollutants by retrofitting 124 school bus engines and posting 188 anti-idling signs at all Yonkers public schools.

Representatives of the Green Policy Task Force, Yonkers Public Schools, Yonkers City Council, Congresswoman Nita Lowey's office, and the EPA met at Beczak for an inaugural ride on two "clean" buses to the Foxfire School in Yonkers where they were greeted by a cheering crowd of students who created a lively program including green living tips, poetry and music in memory of GPTF coordinator Laura Fahrenthold-Pittman's late husband, [Mark Pittman](#), an award-winning journalist for Bloomberg News.

The good news is that the filters will reduce toxic emissions by nearly 2,600 lbs. of promethium, 620,000 lbs. of colbalt, and 25,200 lbs. of hydrocarbons over the buses' lifetime.

"Yonkers has taken a major step toward reducing the toxic bus and car fumes that are released into the atmosphere on school grounds," stated [Council President Chuck Lesnick](#). "This is not to mention the public awareness campaign surrounding anti-idling laws that we have in place here in Yonkers. I applaud the Green Policy Task Force and the Yonkers Public Schools' hard work and dedication to this environmental undertaking and hope that other municipalities will follow our lead."

Green Policy Task Force Chairman Bob Walters said that while the retrofitting devices are hard at work, they often go unnoticed since they are not visible to passerby, unlike the anti-idling signs that are now clearly posted at all Yonkers schools.

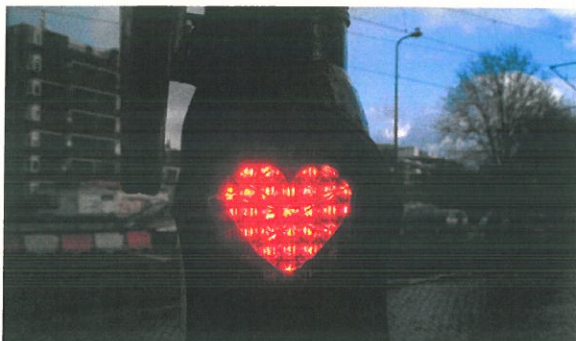
"We are counting on everyone's cooperation, from drivers to parents to crossing guards to be aware of Yonkers anti-idling law and remind drivers to turn off their engines," said Walters.

The Yonkers Public Schools and the Green Policy Task Force have held four mandatory school bus driver and school bus monitor education programs to review the city's three-minute idling law since 2008. Hundreds of individual drivers also signed pledges to turn off their engines.

The city currently spends approximately \$37 million a year on school transportation for approximately 750 runs a day to 39 public schools and 22 non-public schools in the district.

Photo Credit: MJ Wilson

Bright Lights, Big Yonkers



Yonkers recently received a \$1 million federal stimulus award to upgrade existing traffic lights at 33 intersections throughout the city and to convert lighting from incandescent to LED.

The benefits over the old-style incandescent bulbs are many and include:

- LEDs are brighter. The LED arrays fill the

entire "hole" and have equal brightness across the entire surface, making them appear brighter overall.

- LED bulbs last for about 10 years, while incandescent bulbs last for about 24 months. Replacing bulbs costs is costly and it also ties up traffic. Increasing the replacement interval can save big dollars.

- LED bulbs save a lot of energy.

"This is great news for the city because it saves energy and it saves money," says Council President Chuck Lesnick.

He explained the cost savings by assuming that a traffic light uses one 100-watt bulb that is on for 24 hours a day, using 2.4 kilowatt-hours per day. If power costs eight cents per kilowatt-hour, one traffic signal costs about 20 cents a day to operate, or about \$73 per year. Multiply that by eight signals per intersection, and you're up to about \$600 per year in power per intersection.

Since most big cities have thousands of intersections, it can cost millions to power the traffic lights. LED bulbs might consume 15 or 20 watts instead of 100, so the power consumption drops by a factor of five or six. Therefore a municipality can easily save a million dollars a year by replacing all of the bulbs with LED units.

These low-energy bulbs also open the possibility of using solar panels instead of running electrical lines, especially in rural areas.

Work is scheduled to be completed by early July.

In My Backyard

Think you can't change the environment right in your own backyard?

Learn how to do so through a permaculture workshop from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. on March 6 at [Beczak Environmental Center](#).

Andrew Faust of the Center for Bioregional Living will show how to transform your backyard into a garden in synch with nature through traditional methods, intuition, and in-depth site analysis. Bring questions about your garden and home, and learn about permaculture ideas that can improve your quality of life, simplify your needs, and increase your family time together. Topics include organic gardening, building with local natural materials, ecological lawn, meadow, stream and wetland care as well as maintaining orchards, composting, off-the-grid water systems, and domestic and wild animal management.



Registration is required. Email dsukup@beczak.org or call (914) 377-1900 ext. 13.

Sustainable Breakfast Series



Hear ye all civic-minded environmentalists.

Set aside March 18 and April 22 for panel discussions on eco-friendly business practices with Reckson Associates and the law firm of Zarin & Steinmetz from 7:30-9:00 a.m.

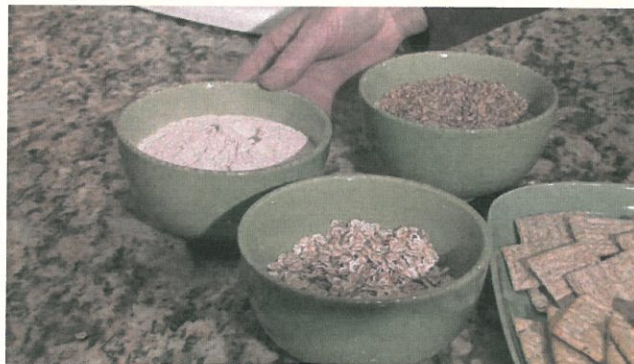
WHERE: 360 Hamilton Ave., White Plains, NY (914) 682-7800.

Talk About Food

If you're passionate about food, nutrition, and/or history, join [Groundwork Hudson Valley's](#) environmental food team.

Membership gets you:

- Free weekly lectures on the history of food, food production and culinary habitats from around the world.
- Free field trips to local farms and gardens.
- Free tours of the Yonkers Science Barge for you and your family.
- Free produce from the Yonkers Science Barge.
- Free T-shirts for participating.
- Free recipes and preparation ideas for locally-grown produce.
- Volunteer opportunities teaching youth about healthy eating.



Meetings are on Tuesdays from 3-4 p.m. at Philipse Manor Hall, 29 Warburton Avenue Yonkers (at Dock Street on Larkin Plaza) - Free Parking! Call (914) 375- 2151 for more information.

Popping the Question: Real Man on the Street Interview



OK, this eblast question got a tad more scientific... (If anyone needs a lifeline, call your mother.)

And the question is... Does electricity generation have an effect on the environment?

We stood outside Belle Havana in downtown Yonkers to ask the passersby.

"Well sure," said a guy named Sam, wrestling with his dog's leash. "It makes the room hotter."

Oh boy!

"You mean does the light shine out the windows or something like that?" asked the next person.

Just when we thought the world was coming to an end, we flagged down a Con Ed truck.

The worker explained that most electricity is generated by power plants using non-renewable fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas. Unfortunately, all of these fuels release carbon dioxide, which is classified as a dangerous greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere, causing global warming.

"So what's a person to do, live by candlelight?" we asked.

The man said many people think of nuclear power as the way to go.

"Sure it does not create global warming, but it is hard to safely store nuclear waste and there is a huge danger for spillage," he explained.

Fair enough. So what's the solution?

Answer: Renewable energy sources.

Now we were on a new roll.

Excuse me Miss. Can you name three renewable energy sources to replace electric power plants?

She couldn't.

OK. This was not going to be easy. We're had to aim for multiple choice.

"Sir, can you tell me, is solar power a renewable or a non-renewable energy resource?"

The man who introduced himself as Ramzee responded correctly.

Phew!

FYI- the rest include:

- Solar Power
- Hydro-electric power
- Wind Power
- Tidal Power
- Ocean Wave Power
- Geothermal Power
- Ocean Thermal Power

Until next time...

Attention Green Students

A Student Sustainability Summit will be held from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 6 at the Hackley School, 293 Benedict Avenue Tarrytown in conjunction with the Ursuline School.

All are welcome to attend.

The student initiated and organized event aims to form a youth



environmental network for the lower New York area and to plan collective activism. Students will also have the chance to connect with like-minded individuals from the county and beyond and to learn about climate change through speakers' presentations.

The event is completely free and students are encouraged (but not required) to bring a teacher moderator with them.

For more information, please visit www.sss2010.wordpress.com. Or call (914) 844-3818.

Heating Oil Debate



Did you know that home heating oil is extremely high in sulfur and the pollution it releases is linked to public health effects including aggravated asthma, development of chronic bronchitis and irregular heartbeat?

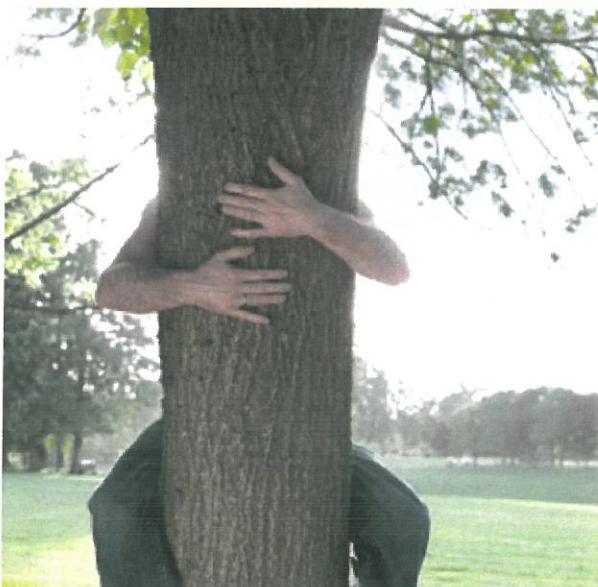
The New York State Senate is currently debating whether to pass a [bill](#) that would protect public health and greatly reduce air pollution. The bill in question would require the most widely-used heating oil -- No. 2-- to meet the same refinement standards the

federal government currently mandates for diesel oil used in on-road vehicles.

The sulfur reduction that will result from passing this bill would be the equivalent of shutting down two and a half coal plants in New York State!

Help all New Yorkers breathe a little easier by taking a moment [now](#) to contact the New York State Senate.

The Greenies Are Coming



Do you know someone who uses sand instead of salt for snow? A homeowner who improved the carbon footprint of his/her home? An environmentally committed volunteer? A company with sustainable practices? Someone who reminds drivers not to idle? A seed saver?

They can win accolades and a chance to walk the green carpet at the GPTF's second annual Greenies Awards scheduled from 7- 10 p.m. on Friday, April 23 at the [Park Hill Tennis and Racquet Club](#).

The Oscar ceremony spin-off recognizes local citizens who have made efforts within their personal and professional lives to preserve the environment.

Last year was a terrific success as hundreds gathered in anticipation of who would be crowned Mr. and Mrs. Green Yonkers as well as who would win awards for their everyday contributions to preserving the environment.

This year, we will also hold a raffle to help raise money for a GPTF sponsored college scholarship. If you have any items to donate such as a vacation home stay, event tickets, or services, please contact us.

The GPTF needs your help to make this event another success this year. We encourage you to nominate friends, neighbors and colleagues for Greenie Awards! Note that the nominees must either live or work in Yonkers and cannot be paid environmental professionals. In other words, we cannot present awards to a company that makes solar panels but we can award someone who elected to install them at their home or business.

Send us your nominee's name, email address and phone number along with a brief description of their green activities by emailing laura.fahrenheit@yonkersny.gov or calling 914-377-6067.

Calling All Homeowners and Renters

Find out if you qualify for free or low-cost financial incentives to increase your home's energy efficiency from 7-9 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 18 at 177 Hillside Ave. in Greenburgh. This home energy saving workshop is sponsored by Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins. Light Refreshments will be provided.

RSVP to Elyssa Rothe, [Energy \\$mart](#) Community Coordinator for Westchester County at (914) 572-4236 or rothe.elyssa@gmail.com

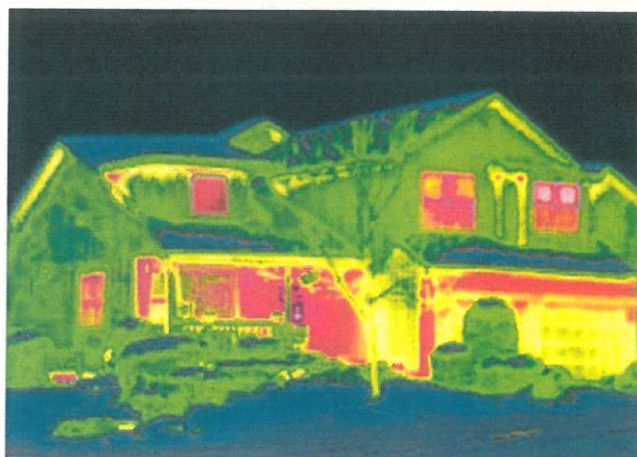
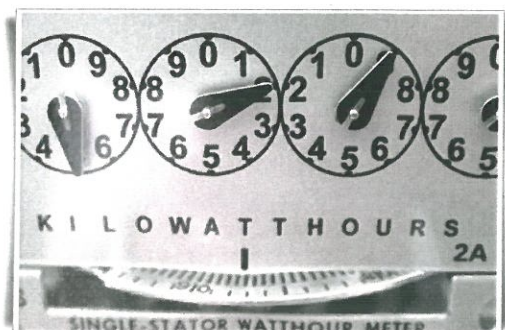


Photo: Red shows energy escape from standard home

Join the Net Metering Movement



Please urge the Senate to pass S.6700. This legislation amends the Public Service Law to ensure all utility customers can install and net meter on-site renewable energy systems.

Net metering not only encourages customer investment in renewable energy, such as solar and wind power, but it is also a simple, fair and low-cost strategy that nearly every state has pursued.

On-site renewable power systems have a number of benefits, including reducing the stress on the electric grid, allowing customers to avoid volatile and rising energy costs and

providing environmental, public health and economic benefits.

Renewable energy systems typically are not cost-effective investments without net metering. Recognizing this fact, New York State's net metering law was expanded in 2008 to cover non-residential customers installing wind and solar energy systems.

However, the law passed contained language that prevented many customers from installing appropriately sized systems.

S.6700 will allow non-residential consumers to install renewable energy systems that are not larger than 2 megawatts. This will help these utility customers make the transition to renewable energy. S.6700 will also create jobs, reduce our dependence on foreign oil and clean our air.

Chemical Free Lawn Care



Believe it or not, some of your neighbors are still using chemical lawn fertilizers to control weeds despite reports of devastating health and environmental damage caused to people, pets, and all other forms of life, not to mention our precious waterways such as the Saw Mill and Hudson Rivers.

Rather than getting upset, spread the "green" word about this upcoming organic lawncare program by national expert Chip Osborne, co-chair of the Living Lawn Project, NOFA Organic Land Programs and President of Osborne Organics and Patti Wood, founder and president of Grassroots Environmental Education, a non-profit focusing on links between common environmental exposures and human health problems.

WHEN: Wednesday, February 24th 7:30 p.m. at The Church of St. Barnabas - Parish Hall 15 North Broadway, Irvington.

For additional information contact chemicalfreelawncare@gmail.com

Save the Trees!



The Westchester County Board of Legislators' Committees on Environment and Energy will have a joint meeting discussing Consolidated Edison's recent tree cutting along electric transmission line corridors. Both committees will also address legislation calling for a moratorium on Con Edison's tree cutting program and a revision of the State's Public Service Commission requirements.

When: Monday, February 22 at 3:00 p.m.

Where: Westchester County Board of Legislators Committee Room, 148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor, White Plains, NY.

Why: Recent tree cutting and clearing along electric transmission line corridors has raised many questions and concerns among homeowners and municipalities that border these lines. Con Edison operates and manages the transmission lines, which span from Yonkers to Yorktown.

This eblast is provided by the [City of Yonkers Green Policy Task Force](#). Its members research and submit potential "green" legislative initiatives to the City Council; work on potential quality-of-life improvements for the Yonkers community; apply for environmental grants; and foster educational outreach for Yonkers students as well as the community-at-large. Their public meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. on the 4th floor of City Hall.

If you know of others in the environmental community who would like to receive this news or attend meetings, please email laura.fahrenthold@yonkersny.gov

From: Council President Chuck Lesnick with Chairman Bob Walters and Coordinator Laura Fahrenthold-Pittman; District 1 Majority Leader Patricia McDow with Margaret Setterholm; District 2 Councilmember Wilson Terrero with Nortrud Spero; District 3 Councilmember Joan Gronowski with Bert Rothing; District 4 Councilmember Dennis Shepherd with Terry Joshi; District 5 Minority Leader John Murtagh with Molly Roffman; District 6 Councilmember John Larkin with Mel Goldstein; Administration's Appointee Joe D'Lando.

Written by Laura Fahrenthold-Pittman

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